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not depart? Criticism can only become thoroughly free when these taxes are abolished; and if Mr. Gruneisen's pamphlet should help forward this reform, he will deserve the thanks of all who, like ourselves, advocate a thorough severance between the *impresario* and the journalist.

J. F. PICKETT, ELTHAM.

*A New and Easy Method of Learning to Play the Scales: designed for the use of Young Beginners.* By W. H. GILL.

THIS is a laudable attempt to show the place of every note in the scales on the key-board of the Pianoforte. Upon long strips of card-board the scales are written in the staff (the major on one side and the relative minor on the other); and as the grouping of the black keys is shown underneath, the young pupil learns the position of the notes pictorially, the semitones being placed close together, and the fingering being carefully marked in the middle of the black circle representing the note. Experience only can prove whether this method is easier than the old plan of teaching the notes from the paper, and afterwards transferring them on to the key-board. For our own part, we are rather inclined to believe that it is scarcely desirable to save a pupil the trouble of thinking. Study cannot be made a pastime; and when a child is old enough to practise the scales, it is old enough to regard them as something more than a series of ladders, with black and white steps, as shown in Mr. Gill's method. Too many children are taught to play as a parrot is taught to speak; and it is only because we utterly disagree with this system that we offer one word against the ingenious invention before us.

HEALEY AND CO., CHESTER.

*An Evening Service.* Composed by the Rev. WM. STATHAM, B.A.

WE find it difficult to satisfy ourselves as to the manner in which Mr. Statham's Service should be treated, whether we should regard it as a mere exercise (in the style of the 17th century) or a piece of devotional writing intended for use in the service of the church. If it be intended as an exercise, we can only say that—apart from the question of impropriety in so misusing sacred words—it is ingenious, and exhibits for an amateur an unusual knowledge of the rules and resources of counterpoint. But if the latter hypothesis be correct, it altogether becomes a matter of graver import. To those who are striving daily and hourly, both by precept and practice, to place matters of this kind in their true light, it must appear strange that there should exist in these days a class of persons who have been blessed with all the advantages to be derived from early cultivation and training, but who are, at the same time, capable of setting about an important work without taking the slightest pains to first ask Why? or Wherefore? Take the present Service as an example. We find two compositions fitted more or less clumsily to the divine song of the Blessed Virgin, and the touching "Nunc dimittis" of S. Simeon. We think it almost impossible for any one to carefully read over those two canticles—one so full of ingenuousness and holy fervour, with its touching piece of artlessness "For behold, all generations shall call me blessed;" and the other so redolent of dignity and thankfulness, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation"—we repeat it seems impossible to read over these utterances of inspiration, and then coolly to sit down and unite them to strains which can only be described as weak imitations of the intensely prosaic settings of Gibbons and his immediate followers. Yet all this is done here. The quiet opening of the Magnificat, "My soul doth magnify" is here set to a heavy, ungraceful subject given out by the Basses, and imitated in turn by the Tenors, Altos, and Sopranos: the "working" exhibiting a more or less faithful reproduction of 17th century work. And so it is nearly all through. Whenever there is a chance,

and occasionally when there is not, a "subject" is given out—sometimes screamed by the Trebles; sometimes howled by the Altos, and occasionally grumbled by the Basses. But no matter which begins, the rest are sure to follow in their turn, like a flock of sheep. Now we had imagined that this sort of thing was becoming scarce, that, except in the very few instances where the words would suggest such a treatment (as in the case of "Hosanna to the Son of David," (Gibbons) where the rising clamour of the multitude is superbly rendered by passages of close imitation), or, again, where the words would simply admit without suggesting it (as in the concluding phrases of the Gloria Patri) such out-of-date notions had exploded, but we regret to see such is not altogether the case. And we beg leave to say that we regret it the more in the present instance, as Mr. Statham exhibits in some portions of his work a power, which, were it entirely unfettered, might probably enable him to adorn an Art which it is impossible not to see he has loved well enough to follow with hard and laborious toil. Hitherto he has only to all appearance succeeded in getting at the dry husks, which he has mistaken for the grain: but, providing he goes to work in the true spirit of an Art worker, and throws off his present trammels, it is safe to predict the nearness of his reward.

Fearing lest the above remarks might convey an impression undesigned and undesired by us, we feel it our duty to add that the above Service exhibits much good writing, and by many eminent musicians might, in all probability, be described as a fine service of the true cathedral type, abounding in passages of considerable intricacy and ingenuity: solid and church-like in its harmonies; elaborate but appropriate in its construction. Most of this might, on our part, be conceded, and yet the composition be far from what it ought to be. In brief, we consider double-counterpoint antagonistic to sacred devotion.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

*The Te Deum, Jubilate, Sanctus, Kyrie and Nicene Creed.* Set in an easy form by C. G. VERRINDER, Mus. Bac., Oxon.

TO make a musical setting of the Canticles and other offices in the service of the English Church which shall thoroughly fulfil all the varied requirements of such a work, is a task worthy the attention of the most practised musician. It is a well recognized fact that compression, or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, concentration, is one of the greatest difficulties in composition, literary or otherwise. Any clergyman will tell you that it is far more difficult to write a short sermon than a long one: that it takes more brain-power to compress all you have to say into a solid and concrete form, than to be free to make your sermon as discursive and lengthy as you please. And we all know that in music the composition of a good original Hymn Tune or Chant is beset with a number of difficulties, many of which almost wholly disappear in the construction of a larger work. But, oddly enough, these difficulties appear to be greater and more numerous in a setting of the Canticles, &c., than in almost any other class of composition known to us, for the compression necessary in the case of a single chant is here required through whole movements, some of which—as the *Te Deum*—are of considerable length. The necessity for not repeating the words, the difficulty of following, and giving an adequate rendering to, the ever-changing sentiment, and the utter impossibility of, what is understood, as developing a subject in the slightest degree, is quite sufficient to render a "Service" an exception to ordinary rules; and at the same time indicates that so difficult and important a class of composition should not be attempted by any but the most experienced masters in the art.

A careful examination of the compositions of Mr. Verrinder now under notice has tended to convince us that though Mr. Verrinder is in possession of many of the necessary requirements for such a work, yet he is not